

7 January 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Records Management Division, ISS

STATINTL

FROM: [REDACTED]

Chief, Classification Review Division, ISS

SUBJECT: GAO Requirements for Information Bearing on  
Systematic Review for Declassification

1. Attached is a C/CRD memorandum for record of discussions with GAO representatives on systematic review for declassification together with a list of their information requirements.
2. Also attached is a C/ISS memorandum dated 19 July 1979 entitled, "CIA Holdings of Permanent Records" which ties into the GAO requirements.
3. Would you please address the GAO requirement concerning the status of records control schedules together with total records holdings and the percentage breakdown into permanent and temporary. I am asking NFAC and DDS&T on a priority basis to verify or adjust the figures in the aforementioned C/ISS memorandum. You may want to check the figures for Records Center, Archives, and Headquarters which combined comprise total CIA records holdings. DO and O/DCI stand on the figures noted in C/ISS's memorandum.
4. We must within the next two weeks determine, as precisely as we can, the number of pages or cubic feet of permanent records to be reviewed by 1988. This is really the base for answering other GAO requirements.
5. I propose to draft the reply to the GAO but will need your input because the GAO requirements cut across both our division's responsibilities. The collection of information should be accomplished within two weeks.

[REDACTED] STATINTL

Attachments: As stated

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DDA/ISS/CRD [REDACTED] :jhp (7 Jan 80)

STATINTL

4 January 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Representatives of GAO on 3 January 1980

1. On 3 January 1980, C/CRD and C/CRD/OPS met with Messrs. Douglas Cannon (TS clearance), William Hutchinson (Secret clearance), and Joseph Frainella (TS clearance) of the General Accounting Office to discuss the Agency's Systematic Classification Review Program. While the GAO representatives had several questions to raise, their primary aim was to determine the cost to the U.S. Government of this program; how helpful and to whom was declassified information; and how much material is there to review by 1988 when, as required under E.O. 12065, all permanent information 20 years of age or older must have been reviewed.

2. We discussed how CIA documents and information are handled at NARS, and pointed out that CIA documents in multiple copies are accessioned to NARS by other agencies. The GAO representatives noticed that other agencies provide guidelines to NARS and the latter does the classification review. C/CRD stated that CIA provides guidelines to enable NARS personnel to identify CIA documents and information but that CRD personnel perform the classification review. He emphasized that experienced intelligence officers must conduct the classification review of intelligence information because of the complexities and nuances involved and the adverse impact of errors on CIA's operations abroad and the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. We noted that NARS personnel can take action on some CIA information, such as unevaluated intelligence reports which are automatically exempt from declassification pursuant to the DCI's letter of October 1978, and documents appearing on CIA computer listings recording review actions previously taken by CRD personnel.

3. The GAO representatives asked about what guidance we provide our reviewers to perform the declassification review and whether copies could be made available to them. We discussed guidelines for systematic declassification review as well as some specific CRP items which could be read in our offices. Emphasis was placed on the general declassification guidelines required under E.O. 12065 and the classification criteria set forth in Section 1-301 of E.O. 12065.

4. The question of most interest to the GAO representatives appeared to be the cost of the declassification program, both systematic and mandatory review. They asked if we could provide at least estimates of the cost of declassification from the Fall of 1972, when our review of OSS documents began up to the present time with projections to 1988. We agreed to provide such information to the best of our ability.

5. A second question of interest was our estimate of material to be reviewed by 1988. C/CRD provided some information on this from the C/ISS memorandum to the four Deputy Directors written on 19 July 1979 subject: "CIA Holdings of Permanent Records." They requested a copy of this ADMINISTRATIVE-INTERNAL USE ONLY memorandum and C/CRD agreed to provide it. They also asked how many people are involved in systematic classification review and whether or not CIA could complete the backlog with current resources allocated to the program. They were told that according to our preliminary workload estimate, and at the current review rate it would take us 42 years to complete the task. An effort is being made to provide a more precise estimate.

6. Another question related to the value to the American public of the information released or declassified. They noted, for example, that the FBI receives a high percentage of FOIA requests from criminals serving time in prisons. They asked what type of people request information from CIA. C/CRD commented generally citing examples of requestors highlighted in the IPD Weekly Report; however, Mr. [REDACTED] C/IPD, was cited as the knowledgeable source in this area. They also asked about Records Control Schedules and whether we had identified permanent from temporary records. We noted that most of the screening had already been accomplished through use of task forces. The name of Mr. [REDACTED] C/RMD, was given as the knowledgeable officer on the creation, use, and updating of Records Control Schedules. The GAO representatives also asked what proportion of CIA records were being declassified in our systematic review. We noted that the percentage varies according to category and age of the records. We are declassifying about 90% of OSS records. C/CRD estimated that 30% of ORE reports are being declassified and promised a more precise figure. [REDACTED] noted that for DO records the percentage is running very low, possibly as little as two percent. Reasons for this were discussed, namely that almost all DO activity involves sources and methods and that it has historically been the practice for intelligence services to keep their organizational data secret as well as their activities. It might be noted here that they also questioned why we felt it was necessary to protect all unevaluated field intelligence reports. We ticked off the following ten points in answer to this:

- a) Confirms the existence of our Station.
- b) Indicates the size of the Station.
- c) Indicates the extent of our intelligence activity.
- d) Reveals areas we target against.
- e) Indicates something of how the Station is organized.
- f) Could indicate covers being used, particularly official cover.
- g) Reveals incompatible operations.
- h) May confirm a liaison relationship.
- i) Could betray a liaison penetration.
- j) Could identify sources.

7. The GAO representatives stated that they had already visited State, FBI, DOE, DEA, and other agencies. It appeared that they were concluding that the cost of the systematic declassification program far exceeds what Congress anticipated. They cited a Congressional estimate of ten million a year but noted that it now costs that much at State alone. Although they did not feel that the Congress would go along with relieving CIA and other intelligence agencies from the systematic review requirement, they are considering recommending that the requirement be abandoned with agencies responding only to mandatory review requests. Thus, information would be available to those who want it and intelligence agencies would be spared the cost of systematic review of information largely exempt from declassification in any case.

8. The GAO representatives are going to telephone specific questions to C/CRD with C/CRD referring to C/IPD and C/RMD those that pertain to their activities.

 STATINTL

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED VIA TELEPHONE BY  
MR. DOUGLAS CANNON (GAO) RE  
SYSTEMATIC REVIEW FOR DECLASSIFICATION  
(Dates of 4 and 7 January 1980)

1. The number of CIA personnel working on systematic review for declassification each fiscal year beginning with FY 1973 to FY 1980 with projections FY 1981-FY 1988.
2. The yearly cost of systematic review for declassification beginning with FY 1973 to FY 1980 with projections FY 1981-1988.
- ✓ 3. Status of Records Schedules--total holdings with percent permanent and temporary.
- ✓ 4. The estimated number of pages of permanent records to be reviewed by 1988. Rate of review with current resources. Shortfall if any and cost.
- ✓ 5. Number of pages reviewed to date and percent declassified. OSS vs. CIG/CIA.
6. Copies of declassification guidelines.
7. Estimate of percent of CIA records which must be reviewed document by document as opposed to bulk declassification.
8. If CIA relieved of systematic review requirement and continued mandatory review only--what would be the savings?